

THE MUSEUM'S STORY

1995	The Walt Disney Family Foundation is founded.	2006	Environmental assessment of the proposal for a museum is completed.
1998	<i>Walt Disney: An Intimate History of the Man and His Magic</i> is released.	2007	Construction begins on the museum.
1999	The virtual Walt Disney Family Museum goes online.	2009	The Walt Disney Family Museum opens on Oct 1.
2001	<i>Walt: The Man Behind the Myth</i> premieres on Sep 16.	2014	The venue for special exhibitions is dedicated as the Diane Disney Miller Exhibition Hall.

How was the museum created?

The museum is one of several efforts made by The Walt Disney Family Foundation, a nonprofit organization, to tell the story of “the man behind the myth.” In the late 1990s, in partnership with biographers Richard and Katherine Greene, a CD-ROM biography titled *Walt Disney: An Intimate History of the Man and His Magic* was released. A few years later, Walt’s grandson, Walter E.D. Miller, produced a documentary titled *Walt: The Man Behind the Myth*. Additionally, a website was launched called “The Walt Disney Family Museum.” Although this virtual museum was popular, the site’s visitors often asked if there was an actual physical place to learn about Walt.

Inspired by this idea, Diane Disney Miller, Walt’s eldest daughter, and her family began looking for a building that was both historically significant and that would benefit from a refurbishment. Because she and her husband, Ron Miller, had moved to the Bay Area, they searched for a location in San Francisco and found one in the Presidio. Founded and used for centuries as a military base, the Presidio had been decommissioned and transferred to the National Park Service. For a time, one of its storage buildings was used to house a portion of Walt’s mementos and awards. Eventually, one of the barracks buildings was leased to the foundation. After an extensive renovation and construction period, The Walt Disney Family Museum opened on 104 Montgomery Street on October 1, 2009.

Who was Diane?

Diane Disney Miller was Walt’s eldest daughter, born on December 19, 1933. Her greatest love was her family; Diane married fellow University of Southern California student Ron Miller in 1954, and they had seven children. The family eventually moved to the Bay Area and established Silverado Vineyards in Napa.

In the decades after her father died, Diane noticed that many people had a false understanding of Walt Disney. She was also concerned that his name had become more associated with The Walt Disney Company than with the man himself. In response, Diane sought to set the record straight by establishing The Walt Disney Family Foundation,



Diane Disney Miller
courtesy the Walt Disney Family Museum

which was the driving force behind The Walt Disney Family Museum.

A lifelong pianist, Diane was passionate about classical music. She gave generously to the San Francisco Symphony, Napa's Music in the Vineyards, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and she worked tirelessly to help create the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Diane also gave to many other causes, including the Pathway Home in Yountville, California, and the Halo Trust.

At the time of her death in 2013, she served as the president of the Board of Directors of The Walt Disney Family Foundation. All who knew Diane would agree that her enthusiasm and energy was incredible. She went through life with a determination to inspire and entertain, diving into projects with passion and determination. Diane was her father's daughter, a creative force with the perseverance to follow dreams and make a difference.

Why is the museum located in San Francisco?

The San Francisco Bay Area is a center for animation and innovation, qualities for which Walt was famous. Several film studios have facilities in this region, including Pixar Animation Studios, Lucas Film, and DreamWorks Animation. Additionally, many of Walt's descendants live in the Bay Area, and they continue to play a vital leadership role at the museum.



Photo by Ric Miller, courtesy the Walt Disney Family Museum

What's inside the museum?

The Walt Disney Family Museum tells the story of the man behind the myth through Walt Disney's own voice and interactive galleries. With 40,000 square feet of space, the museum features historic materials and artifacts, early drawings and animation, movies, music, state-of-the-art technologies, listening stations, more than 200 video screens, a 14-foot-wide miniature model of Disneyland, and much more. Visitors can also go to the Diane Disney Miller Exhibition Hall, where rotating exhibitions are held. In addition, the 114-seat, *Fantasia*-inspired theater presents screenings of different Disney classic film or television program every month, as well as related lively programs and discussions featuring Disney Legends (a program that recognizes people who have made an extraordinary and integral contribution to The Walt Disney Company), actors, animators, musicians, character voices, and historians. Visitors are encouraged to go to waltdisney.org or call (415) 345-6800 for the latest schedule of events.